



Dear Legislator,

We are grateful to Senator Roger Kahn for bringing attention to the issue of Hepatitis C infections in the state of Michigan and share his concern about the health and safety of our citizens. We applaud the senator for seeking out solutions that will improve the well-being of Michiganders, but we respectfully disagree with the proposal in SB 1130 to include Hepatitis C in the current HIV criminal disclosure statute.

At first glance, mandatory disclosure laws appear to be a common sense approach to decreasing rates of infection. However, years of research and practice experience from public health workers have shown these laws to be counterproductive. Just this year both the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Justice strongly encouraged states not to address these public health issues through the criminal justice system.

Science and research has shown that the best way to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases such as HIV or Hepatitis C is through treatment, and reduced stigma. Individuals living with HIV who are virally suppressed due to treatment are 96% less likely to transmit HIV. We know that being unaware of your status is one of the largest barriers to treatment and increases transmission of the disease. We also know that fear of testing is a result of Michigan's HIV criminalization law. Expanding the current law to include Hepatitis C is likely to have equally undesirable consequences.

Again, we want to state firmly that we share Sen. Kahn's commitment to the health and well-being of Michiganders. However, expanding criminalization of additional health statuses will undermine public health initiatives and hinder Michigan from achieving our shared goal. We strongly encourage members of the Michigan legislature to vote no on SB 1130.

Signed,

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